

MISSION HEROES.

# Bishop Smythies



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CHARLES ALAN SMYTHIES,

BISHOP OF ZANZIBAR, AND  
MISSIONARY BISHOP IN EAST CENTRAL AFRICA.

BY THE  
REV. E. HERMITAGE DAY, B.A.,  
VICAR OF ABBEY CWMHIR.

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“Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these  
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,  
The sea is His, He made it.”

TENNYSON, *Enoch Arden*.

CHARLES ALAN SMYTHIES, the subject of this memoir, was born on August 6, 1844, at Colchester, where his father was then Curate of St. Mary-at-the-Walls. The death of his father caused the removal of the family to Dorset, where the childhood and boyhood of the future bishop were spent. From the first he manifested that sympathy with nature and power of close observation which in after life his letters from Africa revealed. He followed the study of natural history, on its practical side, with more than an ordinary boyish enthusiasm; and the



healthy outdoor life by the seaside doubtless aided the development of the remarkable physical strength and endurance which stood him in such stead in his long walks from the East Coast of Africa to Lake Nyasa.

He received his early education at Felstead School, and at Milton Abbas. At the age of twenty he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, taking his degree three years later. After leaving Cambridge he spent two years in private tuition before proceeding to Cuddesdon Theological College. In 1869 he was made deacon, and two years later ordained priest, by the Bishop of Oxford, to the curacy of Great Marlow. In the following year he removed to Roath, at the invitation of the vicar, the Rev. F. W. Puller. Work in a parish of eighteen thousand souls is of necessity arduous, and work in Wales has its own special difficulties and discouragements. But Mr. Smythies was not a man to be easily daunted. He devoted himself to the work at Roath with untiring energy, under a vicar for whom his admiration and affection were lifelong. It was one of his last pleasures to hear that Father Puller had consented to preach the sermon at the Anniversary of the Mission—a sermon of which the sad theme was the bishop's death, and from which may be quoted Father Puller's estimate of his colleague's work at Roath—

“I can remember, as if it were but yesterday, a certain day in March, 1872, when Bishop Smythies, then a young priest of only a year's standing, came first to the great parish of Roath, in South Wales, where the next eleven years of his life were spent. And I can bear witness how that, during those eleven years, first as assistant-curate and afterwards as vicar, he laboured unremittingly

and most fruitfully among all classes of the people committed to his care. As it was afterwards in Africa, so it was there—he never spared himself, but did his work to the uttermost out of love to our Lord, and out of love to the souls of his people.”

In 1880 Mr. Puller resigned the vicarage of Roath, and at his suggestion Mr. Smythies was appointed in his place. The charge was one of great responsibility, and it was felt that none would fill it better than he who had served the curacy with so much diligence and sympathy. At Roath, and from Mr. Puller, says one who knew him well, he gained much, both intellectually and spiritually. He gained undoubtedly the capacity for wise and liberal administration which marked his exercise of the episcopal office. “No one can with safety rule who has not first learnt to obey” is a precept as true as old; and in the faithful discharge of the subordinate office Mr. Smythies had gained the authority which comes of obedience.

Mr. Smythies remained at Roath for three years after the departure of Mr. Puller, and during his tenure of the vicarage the work of building up the Church went forward apace. He had the gift of attracting to himself zealous and devoted fellow-workers, both lay and clerical, and of inspiring them with some measure of his own high faith and unwearying diligence. He was to them rather a leader than a director, and one of his colleagues has written of him as “setting an example which excited admiration, not to say wonder, among those who tried to follow him at a respectful distance.”

“The man who can work with ceaseless energy all day, rising at 6 a.m., and retiring to rest at midnight, whose

meals at all times are abstemious, but who, during Lent, eats no meat or butter on weekdays, while doing the work of two men, is a difficult man to copy, even from a physical point of view. But when to this extraordinary strength and vigour of body was added untiring devotion to his work; a genuine affection for all his people, for 'he drew them with the cords of a man, with bands of love;' eloquence above the average; good all-round mental capacity; and, as the mainspring of it all, a habit of always being present at the daily Eucharist, and a time set apart day by day for prayer—for he was a man of prayer, and worked in the spirit of prayer—it is not difficult to understand what a tower of strength he was to the Church, and what a power his name still is in the place, although his work there ended more than ten years ago."

The work at Roath, so dear to the heart of him who had consolidated and advanced it, was interrupted by the offer of the missionary bishopric of Central Africa. The sudden death of Bishop Steere had left a vacancy hard to fill, for his gifts of heart and brain and hand were many and rare and various. When the Committee of the Mission approached Mr. Smythies with the request that they might nominate him for the vacant see, he instantly declined. The call did not then seem to come with an irresistible force: he could not see in himself the qualifications which he felt to be necessary for the office, and which those who made the offer perceived in him: above all, the claims of the work at Roath were many and strong. But when more than a year had passed away in fruitless search for a successor to Bishop Steere, and one after another to whom the Committee had appealed had found themselves unable to accept the post, the Committee returned to its first choice and Mr. Smythies



was asked to reconsider his refusal. The second appeal was successful; in the months of vain search, and in the renewal of the appeal to him, Mr. Smythies saw a clear evidence of God's will for him. And, indeed, only a firm belief in the reality of his vocation could have induced him to leave the work at Roath. Priest and workers and people there were united not only by the interest of the common work, but also by the bond of a real and intimate affection.

"The news of his appointment was received at Roath with something like dismay. The vicar seemed to have made his home for good and all among them; he was so unmistakably happy and content in his work, he had become so much a part of the life of his parishioners, that it never occurred to them to face the possibility of losing him. No one who knew him could doubt that it gave him pain to break from his people and his work at Cardiff, but few could realize what it cost him. The act of leaving Roath and the acceptance of the bishopric represent a spiritual crisis in the bishop's history; they mark, in truth, in him the moment of that great renunciation of which our Lord and Master spake when He said, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' To his flock he said, 'If God is calling me, He will not let any one really suffer by my obeying the call. As to myself, it does not very much matter where we live or how long we live, if we only try to live nobly and obediently.'"

He was consecrated in St. Paul's Cathedral on St. Andrew's Day, 1883, and left England for his new work in the following January.

Each of his predecessors in the bishopric had left his mark upon the Mission, and had endowed it with some portion of his spirit.

Bishop Mackenzie, in the brief year of his episcopate, had founded the noble traditions of devotion and self-sacrifice, to which the Mission has ever been faithful,

Bishop Tozer, with admirable foresight, had moved the head-quarters of the Mission to Zanzibar, seeing that it was from the great trading town as a centre that the Mission would best reach Lake Nyasa, which was always regarded as the goal of the Mission, and the ultimate sphere of its work. He had begun the great work of training the rescued slaves as teachers and priests, for the care of rescued slaves—alas for the necessity!—is still a most important part of the mission work in Zanzibar.

Bishop Steere had employed his wonderful linguistic gifts in reducing to writing Swahili, the dominant language of Zanzibar and East Central Africa, and in giving to the natives the Word of God in their own language. In his episcopate the mainland central stations of Masasi and Magila were founded; and the work on the Lake was begun by the Rev. W. P. Johnson and his heroic companion the Rev. Charles Janson.

Before Bishop Smythies lay the task of consolidating the work thus begun, and of extending it as opportunity offered.

The bishop arrived in Zanzibar on February 25, 1884—his influence inducing no fewer than seven missionaries to accompany him, the Rev. Duncan Travers being one of the number—and after a few weeks at head-quarters, he left for a visit to the mainland stations. His first Easter in Africa was spent in Magila, the head-station of the group in the Usambara country. Here he had his first touch of African fever, from which he soon recovered. On his return to Zanzibar he ordained to the priesthood the Rev. P. L. Jones-Bateman, now Archdeacon of Zanzibar, and



Principal of the Theological College at Kiungani. The ordination was the first held in the Swahili tongue, of all the East African languages the one most widely used, and therefore is the principal language of the Mission, both in Zanzibar and on the mainland. Shortly afterwards the first Synod of the Mission was held, attended by fourteen members of the Mission staff. In the summer the bishop went south, to visit the mainland stations in the Rovuma district, near the great river of that name up which Bishop Mackenzie had unsuccessfully journeyed in his first attempt to reach the interior of the continent.

In the following year the bishop paid his first visit to Lake Nyasa. The work on the Lake had been begun by the Rev. C. A. Janson and the Rev. W. P. Johnson, in the year 1882. They had reached its shores by an overland journey from Masasi—a journey so exhausting that Mr. Janson had died as soon as they had reached the Lake, and had been buried on the Lake shore by his companion. Mr. Johnson, a man of energy so untiring that the natives had nicknamed him “The man who never sits down,” had laboured on the Lake for eighteen months quite alone. When he returned to England it was to plead for a Mission steamer to navigate the Lake, for his experience had shown that without a steamer the work on the Lake shore would not only be far more difficult, but also far more dangerous to the health of the workers. The little steel vessel was built in England, taken to pieces and sent out to the Zambesi in four hundred packages, and carried by native porters from the Zambesi to the Lake

without the loss of a single package or the desertion of one native porter. Lay members of the Mission put the vessel together on the shore of the Lake ; and from the pen of one of these missionary-engineers, Mr. W. Bellingham, under the title, "The Diary of a Working Man in Central Africa," \* we have the graphic description of the difficulties of the work. The Bishop reached the Lake in August, 1885, travelling up the Zambesi, and visiting on the way the grave of his great predecessor Bishop Mackenzie. The Mission steamer was launched in the following month, and dedicated by the bishop to the service of God, under the name of the *Charles Janson*. One thing only marred the brightness of the event. The Rev. W. P. Johnson had been invalided while on his way up to the Lake by an attack of ophthalmia, which left him for the time completely blind, and from which he never fully recovered.

During this visit to the Lake the bishop secured a site on the island of Likoma, a convenient and comparatively healthy centre for the mission work on the Lake. From it as a centre the *Charles Janson* has ever since plied up and down, visiting at regular intervals the numerous villages on the Lake shore where the native teachers are working, but where the European clergy cannot sleep without danger to health and life. Likoma has now grown to be the head-quarters of the Bishop of Nyasaland, the Western Diocese of the Mission.

From the Lake the bishop returned on foot to the stations on the Rovuma, a walk occupying

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forty-five days. In the spring of the following year he consecrated the large stone church of the Holy Cross at Magila, where the work had grown enormously. Soon afterwards the second native deacon, Cecil Majaliwa, was ordained in the Slave Market Church at Zanzibar—a pledge of the native African ministry.

In the following years the bishop twice travelled on foot from the coast to Lake Nyasa and back. It is so simple to record the bare fact, and so difficult adequately to realize what is implied in it, that the following extract from the letter of a native porter may be quoted. It throws a clearer light on the difficulties of the way than the modest accounts written by the bishop himself.

“We arrived at Nangwale, and we left on Monday; and Tuesday we travelled in the same way. Wednesday at Alasiri (*i.e.* 3 o'clock) we lost our way, we slept, there was not a thing of food. Thursday we travelled on our way till the third hour (9 a.m.), and presently we got to know that it was not the way to our place. We split the wood (*i.e.* they left the path they were on), we were very thirsty, the great master (the Bishop) was not able to overlook us for hunger and thirst. But God gave us necessities, for we killed a small animal, and we were cured till we got water, until Friday. God helping us to get the way, we got again to the river Lugenda; we drank water Alasiri, we arose, and directly after we arose there met us our people. We rejoiced to see them again, and to get food for the Bishop, for we had fear for the life of the Lord Bishop from hunger. We said, ‘*We* are able to eat insects of the wood, but *he* will not be able to eat, and to be cured with bad things.’ Afterwards there was food, and we were very thankful, and we said, ‘Now he will get strength again.’”

The work on the Lake showed a steady increase: in four years the staff had more than doubled, and the *Charles Fanson* enabled the missionaries



to found station after station on the Lake-shore. It was, therefore, almost necessary that the bishop should visit the Lake every year, even though it involved a journey of six months' duration, and an amount of fatigue which would have daunted any man with less strength of body or of will. On his first visit to the Lake he had written, "Since I have been here I feel greatly the advantage of the same bishop having jurisdiction here and at Zanzibar. Where there is so much connection in other ways, it is well that there should be this connection also." But the growth of the work, both on the Coast and on the Lake, led him ultimately to modify his first impressions.

In Zanzibar, also, the work had been steadily growing. At Kiungani a Theological College was formed, which may well be called the heart of the Mission, and those native students who showed aptitude for, and vocation to the Sacred Ministry, were banded together into a guild. The bishop, when at Zanzibar, resided at Kiungani, where his best hopes for Africa were centered.

In 1888 the bishop came to England for the Lambeth Conference. It was an eventful year for the Mission. The parcelling-out of Africa by the European Powers, and the general scramble for "spheres of influence," had resulted in grave disturbances in the neighbourhood of the stations on the Lake and at Magila, where the Germans had come into conflict with the coast tribes. At the latter station the situation became so strained that the bishop hastily returned to Zanzibar to take counsel with the members of the Mission. The stations themselves were not

in danger for the moment, as the natives were able to distinguish between the English missionaries and the German parties of exploration. But the boat in which the bishop sailed was fired upon, and he was in considerable danger from an excited mob after he had landed. He was, however, permitted to make his way up country, and reached Magila safely. In view of the political complications, he judged it prudent to withdraw the ladies of the Mission for a time; but though very strong pressure was put upon the bishop both by the British and German Governments, he refused to withdraw the missionaries, or to take any step for their safety which might endanger the lives or the freedom of the native converts who had trusted them, or which might hazard the spiritual interests of the Mission. The bishop's courage was justified by the course of events. Two years afterwards, at the annual meeting of the S.P.G., the Archbishop of Canterbury was able to say—

“We sometimes wish, as we look back upon the history of our own country and of Europe, that we could have one glimpse, one few minutes' glimpse, of the men who were the makers of England, the makers of Europe. Do you know—I am sure you do—that in listening to these modest, unboastful heroes who have been speaking to you this afternoon, you have before you the men whom generations to come will wish they could see and listen to? It impresses me that Bishop Smythies has a part in the history of his own times. It will impress posterity more when they look back upon the unsupported Englishman who told the statesmen of his own country and the statesmen of the Continent that move he would not. It was easy for him to make himself and his missionaries safe, but what should he do for the sheep that he had brought out of the wilderness?”

In 1889, and again in 1891, the bishop visited

every station under his jurisdiction. In the summer of 1890 he was invalided home, and he took the opportunity of visiting Berlin, with the approval of H.M. Government, to confer with the German Chancellor, in order, if possible, to remove the possibility of friction with the German agents on the East Coast of Africa, since by a recent treaty the Magila stations remained within the sphere of German influence. The interview was entirely successful, and the bishop returned to Zanzibar with a glad heart. He visited Magila soon after his arrival in Africa, and wrote home from there that the German rule had had a most salutary effect in the country. Later in the year, after laying the foundation-stone of the Zanzibar Hospital—a much-needed development of the Mission work—he started on his last journey to the Lake, whence he returned to Zanzibar in time for Christmas.

The last journey to and from the Lake had so tried the bishop's strength that he realized that he would never again be able to make the journey. Other considerations were combining to convince him that the extension of the work of the Mission would henceforth make it impossible for one bishop adequately to supervise the work on the Lake, as well as the work on the East Coast and in Zanzibar. The circumstances of the Mission imperatively demanded the appointment of a bishop for the Nyasa district. Bishop Smythies referred the matter to the home Committee for their consideration; and, in response to their invitation to take counsel with them, he sailed for England in May, 1892. He reached London in time to



take part in the Annual Festival, and it was clear to all who then saw him that his request for the division of the diocese had been made none too soon, if, indeed, not too late. "You see there," said the Bishop of St. Alban's, who presided, "a soldier who has come home from a great campaign, bearing the marks of that campaign in his face." The bishop's request was, in fact, a reluctant confession of his failing strength.

"I suppose," he said at the same meeting, "one comes to the end of one's tether in these things. When I got halfway to Lake Nyasa I found the journey very irksome. I had a large ulcer in my leg, which made it difficult for me to walk, and I got very weary, and felt the burden of the journey very much. Before reaching the Lake I had to travel through the forest for seventeen days, only passing one village. By the time I got to Nyasa I entirely broke down, and for two months was unable to do anything at all, and had a succession of fevers, more or less dangerous. And I felt I could not undertake the journey again."

The bishop's appeal was felt to come with an irresistible force, but the ready generosity of the response with which it was met surprised even the most hopeful friends of the Mission. Within six months eleven thousand pounds were raised for the endowment of the new see, one thousand more than the Committee had asked for; and on December 21 Dr. Wilfrid Bird Hornby was consecrated, with independent jurisdiction in Nyasaland. Both the successful foundation of the see, and the consecration of its first occupant, were the causes of great thankfulness to the bishop; and since he was now relieved of so much fatigue, and so large a share of the heavy burden of responsibility for the Mission,

his friends ventured to hope that he would recover sufficiently from the long illness and prostration, to direct for some years to come the work at Zanzibar and on the East Coast.

It is pleasant to think that in the last two or three years of his life the bishop was permitted to see the fulfilment of several desires which lay very near his heart. The foundation of the see of Nyasaland was one. Another was the visit to the Holy Land and Jerusalem, which he paid in January, 1893, on his way back to Africa for the last time. The pilgrimage gave him intense happiness. Towards the end of his stay in the Holy Land he wrote—

“At every turn there is something of deepest interest—something which calls up memories of the history of the chosen people, or is intimately connected with the salvation of the world. To-day, once more, I have crossed from Bethany to the Mount of Olives, and stood on the spot where our Blessed Lord wept as He beheld before Him all the splendours of the city which He loved, and which rejected Him. Even now, it seems to me, there could be no sight in the world more moving or more full of deep interest, than the city with the Temple in the foreground, as I saw it this afternoon, lit up by the declining sun. To have been allowed to visit it must be one of the greatest happinesses, as well as one of the greatest privileges, of one's life.”

Another desire was granted as soon as he reached Africa, in the ordination of two more native clergy. Denys Seyiti, a native of Nyasa, one of the released slave-boys who had been longest in the Mission, was admitted to the diaconate in Zanzibar Cathedral, at the end of Lent. A week afterwards the two bishops went to Magila, on the mainland, and while they were there Peter Limo was admitted to the same

office His ordination to the priesthood was one of the bishop's last acts, and it gave him especial happiness, since Peter Limo is the first *free-born* African who has gone from a mainland school to the Theological College at Kiungani, and has been ordained priest.

Yet another desire of the bishop was fulfilled in the completion and opening of the Hospital at Zanzibar. In the economy of the Mission, nursing necessarily fills an important part ; for in the treatment of the fevers to which Europeans are subject, the trained nurse is often of more service than the doctor. From time to time members of the St. Barnabas Guild for nurses had gone out to Zanzibar ; and to one of them, now at rest, is due the inception of an undertaking which had for many years been in the bishop's thoughts. The Hospital, "only a little one, but very homelike," was opened with a service of benediction soon after the arrival of the bishop in Zanzibar. It is now staffed by the members of the Guild of St. Barnabas, and is a small but well-arranged building, with wards for European and native patients. It stands almost in the shadow of the cathedral Church of Christ, a perpetual reminder that the mission of the Church is to follow the example of her Master, in caring for the bodies and for the souls of men.

At the end of April, after the departure of Bishop Hornby for Nyasaland, Bishop Smythies left Zanzibar to visit the stations in the Rovuma district, witnessing on the way the capture of a slave-dhow, and the release of a large number of slaves. He was greatly cheered by a visit to Chitangali, where Cecil Majaliwa, the first native



African priest of the Mission, was working ; and the good progress of the work was attested by the number of catechumens who awaited Baptism at his hands. After visiting Masasi and Newala, he returned to Zanzibar for the Synod, the second in the history of the Mission, at which there were present the archdeacon, twelve priests, and three deacons, under the presidency of the bishop, who had conducted a retreat in preparation for it. In the autumn he was again unwell, and remained in hospital for some time. But after a journey to Magila he felt stronger, and resolved on a short preaching journey in the Magila district. He started at the beginning of October, taking with him the African deacon Peter Limo, and one porter. Little provision or baggage of any sort could be taken, and the party were almost entirely dependent on the hospitality of the people through whose villages they passed. Sleeping in native houses, living on native food, cooked and eaten in the native way, they made their tour. The bishop preached in thirteen villages, using the Swahili tongue, which Peter Limo interpreted in Bondei. The long and graphic letters which the bishop wrote home testify to his own enjoyment of the tour, and to the hopefulness with which he regarded the prospects of mission work in the district. "I have known no work more interesting or more profitable to myself," he wrote. "Everything was in my favour. I could hardly have had a more pleasant or helpful companion. The weather was perfect, the country most beautiful." From Kologwe he returned to Misozwe, a far more arduous journey, over precipitous mountain paths, and through swamps

and woods, where the track was several times lost. Everywhere the natives received them with kindly hospitality; and the bishop thought that although their journey had perhaps effected little from a directly missionary point of view, yet that the knowledge gained through it would in the future prove very useful. "The getting to know the country, the nature of the people, and the size of the populations, may at any time turn out to be a help in deciding where we may be called upon to work." As a first result of the tour Peter Limo was sent to found a station at Kibai, one of the villages visited. In December the bishop again visited the Rovuma stations. From Chitangali he wrote hopefully of the native priest's work, and of the tidings of progress which had reached him from Nyasaland; but he found the station exceptionally hot and exhausting.

At the beginning of March the bishop went again to Magila, to ordain Peter Limo to the priesthood. A retreat was held in preparation for the ordination; but the bishop was suffering from an ulcer, and was compelled to rest as much as possible. He remained at Magila for Holy Week and Easter, and taxed his strength severely in taking many of the services, so that on the afternoon of Easter Day he was taken ill with fever, and was for some days in bed. He was able to return to Zanzibar, as he had previously arranged, on April 3, and on his return he took up at once the many threads of his work there—visiting the schools, revising the literature, taking classes, teaching, and preaching. It was then evident that he was far from strong; he himself complained of fatigue, and was obliged

to give up a retreat which he had planned. On the second Sunday after Easter he celebrated at Kiungani in the morning, and preached at the cathedral in the afternoon. Two days later he gave his last address, to the nurses of the Guild of St. Barnabas. On the 14th he was ill with fever, and on the next day he was moved to the hospital, where he remained for three weeks. In the new hospital, where, almost for the first time in the history of the Mission, all the necessities for treating illness were at the disposal of the efficient nursing staff, everything that was possible was done for the bishop. But during the whole of the three weeks he remained prostrated and racked with fever, longing only, as those who nursed him tell us, for the rest which would not come. "If only God of His great mercy will grant me some rest," he said one night. His sufferings were augmented by the exceptional heat. But through all his illness he manifested the unselfishness, the devotion to God and to his work which characterized his whole life. One detail is related by those who were in attendance upon him which well illustrates his conscientiousness. During the three weeks that he remained in hospital, he never once omitted saying the Daily Office, a duty from the performance of which his illness might have been considered an amply sufficient excuse, and which must have cost him real effort. On May 4 he was taken on board the mail steamer *Peiho*, a French vessel of the Messageries Maritimes. He had recovered from the extreme exhaustion sufficiently to walk downstairs to the hammock in which he was carried to the boat, and to climb up the side of the ship. But the



exertion, together with the fatigue of saying good-bye to the members of the Mission who had accompanied him on board, greatly exhausted the bishop, and in the evening he was again restless with a return of the fever. At the time of leaving Zanzibar, none had thought that they were taking a last farewell of the bishop. It was anticipated that the voyage would restore his strength, and that he might even return from Suez or Port Said without going on to England. But it was soon clear to the nurse and to the Rev. Duncan Travers, the Secretary of the Mission, who accompanied the bishop, that the fever and the weakness were increasing. The heat was everywhere intense, and the bishop's cabin was especially close and hot, so that he became very restless, sleeping and waking at short intervals, and he was distressed at not being able to compose himself to say his prayers and offices as usual. Two days after leaving Zanzibar, his temperature was higher, and the aid of the ship's doctor was called in. His treatment gave temporary relief, but late in the evening of May 6 it became clear that all hope of recovery must be abandoned. Early on the morning of May 7 the bishop had a short interval of consciousness, in which he was able to receive the Blessed Sacrament, and three hours later he breathed his last quietly and peacefully.

The *Peiho* was still six hundred miles from Aden, and it was clear that the bishop must be buried at sea. The body was vested in the white cassock and purple cincture which he had worn in life, and on his breast was a little crucifix, over which the hands were folded

The face had lost all trace of emaciation and suffering, to all appearance he lay asleep. At sunset the body, wrapped in sailcloth, was reverently borne by eight of the French sailors to the stern of the vessel. There the Burial Service was read by the Rev. D. Travers, and the body was committed to the deep.

To many of those who mourned the sad tidings which the telegraph flashed from Aden, the fact of the bishop's burial in mid-ocean must have seemed an additional sadness. No fitter resting-place could have been wished for the bishop than the cathedral at Zanzibar, near the grave of its bishop-builder whose work he had so faithfully carried on, and surrounded by the Africans in whose service he had been spent. Yet "the sea is His, and He made it," and the untroubled calm of the depths of the Indian Ocean is an apt symbol of the rest which he so greatly desired.

". . . Thou art with him there,  
Pledge of the untired arm and eye that cannot sleep :

"The eye that watches o'er wild Ocean's dead,  
Each in his coral cave,  
Fondly as if the green turf wrapt his head  
Fast by his father's grave,—  
One moment, and the seeds of life shall spring  
Out of the waste abyss,  
And happy warriors triumph with their King  
In worlds without a sea, unchanging orbs of bliss." \*

The tidings of the bishop's death brought to many in England, even of those who knew him only by his public work, a sense of personal loss. The single-hearted devotion of the bishop's life, the ability of his conduct of the Mission, the statesmanlike character of his public action

\* J. Keble, "The Christian Year,"

under stress of political difficulty, were for a moment forgotten in the thought of the winning personality of the man. The first public announcement of his death was made by the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the annual meeting of the S.P.G. He then spoke of the bishop as "one of the greatest of our missionaries that we have ever had, who had both a scientific knowledge of mission work, and the power of a statesman, and the utmost power of enkindling enthusiasm."

No memory, perhaps, brought more consolation to those who in Africa and in England mourned the bishop, than the recollection of his own words, spoken recently at Oxford, after some losses to the Mission staff by death.

"I suppose we all feel a sadness upon hearing of the frequent losses to the Mission by death. And yet they are not losses when we view them in the light of the Catholic truth. A great gain it is to the Christian to die in the cause of Christ and His Church, and to be reaped by the angels from such a harvest-field. A gain, too, to the whole Church, which, since the scene of Calvary and all that was done there, has ever experienced the truth of victory through suffering. Besides, there is the great consolation afforded of realizing in the Communion of Saints the more frequent and prevailing prayers which the inhabitants of Paradise offer for the Church still militant. It is these martyr-witnesses who have roused the Church at home to send out some of her best sons and daughters to follow in the train of such true disciples of the Great Master."

It were idle to attempt, or to anticipate, within the limits of a brief sketch that estimate of the bishop's life and work which may be looked for in a larger memoir. It must suffice if here we point out two of the chief causes of his missionary success.



The first was the real love which his large heart bore to the African race, despised, down-trodden, enslaved—a love which enkindled in them a like affection. It will be remembered that one of his native clergy, speaking at a great meeting in London, said of the bishop, “*You call him ‘My Lord,’ but I call him ‘My Father.’*”

And, secondly, to his firm insistence upon the independence of the Church in her missionary work may be attributed the confidence which the heathen chiefs reposed in him—a confidence which led them to invite rather than to hinder the founding of new stations. Before he started for Africa, in the troublous days of 1888, he laid down the principles on which he hoped to act. They were—

“That the missionaries should not place reliance in any way on this or that civil government, but that they must entirely fall back on the spiritual power which exists in the Holy Catholic Church by virtue of her union with her Lord.

That they must refuse to gain for themselves any political power or any material wealth.

That they must refuse to entertain any suggestion on the part of any civil power to use their influence in transforming the natives from what they are in their social and political condition into subjects of an alien state.”

Two leading ideas may be said to have moulded and directed all the missionary work of Bishop Smythies. He was convinced that the Church must be put before the African in all the fulness of its teaching and its discipline. There was to be no modification, except in its most trifling details, of Church life and Church work as it appeared in primitive times. And,

if the wisdom of his policy seemed likely to be questioned, he was wont to insist on the fact that human nature, as he had experience of it, was much the same in African and in European.

“Remember, the Africans are the same as we are; differences of colour are no difference in the sight of God. These differences of colour do not prevent their sharing in all the sorrows, all the sufferings that you and I have; and we shall find, if we work among them, that much more than we supposed do they have common thoughts, common aspirations, common feelings with ourselves. It is a very great mistake to think that they are very different from ourselves; the more contact our souls have with theirs, the more we feel and find how much they and we have in common.”

And, as a consequence of this belief, he devoted perhaps the largest share of his thought and energy in raising up little by little the native ministry, in whose future he had the greatest faith; and to which, owing to the climatic dangers which Africa has for Europeans, he looked for the largest share in the future evangelization of the Dark Continent. Speaking at the Folkestone Church Congress, just before his last departure for Africa, he said—

“The Church must not be depressed to a lower level to meet halfway the heathenism of Africa. The Church must embrace the African, and raise him up by means of her sacraments and means of grace, and spread a network round him, and raise him up to her higher level, not abating one jot in morality or spirituality of what she requires of her children here at home. Only so, I believe, will there be a truly, healthy living Church here in Africa. Then only will she dare, as we are daring, to try to form a native ministry, and to put before each boy who has intellectual capacity, and is leading a high moral life, that that is the life he is to look forward to out of gratitude to God; that, as our Lord Jesus Christ has chosen him out of millions of heathen who are still in

darkness to be His son, and has poured down so many blessings upon him, so it should be the highest ambition of his life to take the message of the Holy Gospel to his brethren, and to spend his life in sharing those great blessings which he has received with his brethren, who will remain in heathen darkness if he does not go to teach them. That is what many of our young men have in their hearts ; and one day I am quite sure that we shall see an enthusiastic and able ministry extending the work of the Church far and wide in Africa."

We cannot anticipate the verdict which history will pronounce upon the life-work of Bishop Smythies. Future generations of African Christians may regard him as their Columba, or Aidan, or Augustine. His contemporaries in the English Church will at least thank God for his example, and for his life of apostolic self-denial, zeal, and love.

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